

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (d) The Pharmaceutical industry through their Associations had approached the Government to allow import of Vitamin B1 under OGL. However, no request for importing the same at zero duty has been received. Policy on import of Vitamin B1 is under review.

[*Translation*]

Jute Mill at Katihar

3398. SHRI SHAKUNI CHOUDHURY:
SHRI SURENDRA PRASAD YADAV
(JHANJIHARPUR)

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether old jute mill in Katihar is lying closed since long;

(b) if so, whether the Government contemplate to revive the above said mill;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the time by which it is likely to be revived; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) Katihar jute mill is lying closed since December, 1987.

(b) There is no proposal before the Government to revive the closed mill at Katihar.

(c) to (e) Do not arise.

[*English*]

Hotel to Start in Cochin

3399. SHRI GEORGE EDEN: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are considering to start a STAR Hotel in Bolgatty Island (Cochin) which attracts a large number of tourists;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Ministry would take immediate action to develop the small islands in Arabian Sea near Cochin as a tourist centre; and

(d) if so, the details thereof;

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG): (a) and (b) ITDC's Annual Plan 1998-99 does not envisage any plan scheme/provision for setting up a hotel in Bolgatty Island, Cochin.

(c) and (d) The development of tourism is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments. However, the Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance to State Governments on receipt of specific project proposals, after taking into consideration their *inter-se* priority and availability of funds.

Patent of Rice

3400. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Thai Government made a proposal to the Indian Government to join in its battle against a Texas based Company 'Rice Tec Inc.' claiming to patent a rice variety 'JASMATI' which according to Thai Government is derived from Thailand's famed Jasmine rice;

(b) whether the said patent covers plants and grain developed from the original Basmati; and

(c) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (c) A reference was received from Thai Government concerning the registration of trademarks *Jasmati* by Rice Tec. Inc. in America. The matter was considered and it was conveyed to Thai authorities that India would be able to help the Thai authorities in the matter.

Bilateral Negotiation on Automobile Policy

3401. SHRI D.S. AHIRE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item appearing in "The Hindustan" dated November 9, 1998 wherein it has been stated that the European Union is likely to hold bilateral negotiations with India on the middle of December, 1998 on the country's automobile policy;